

PILOMINUS  
AND MODERN PHILOSOPHIES  
OF RELIGION  
W. R. INGE



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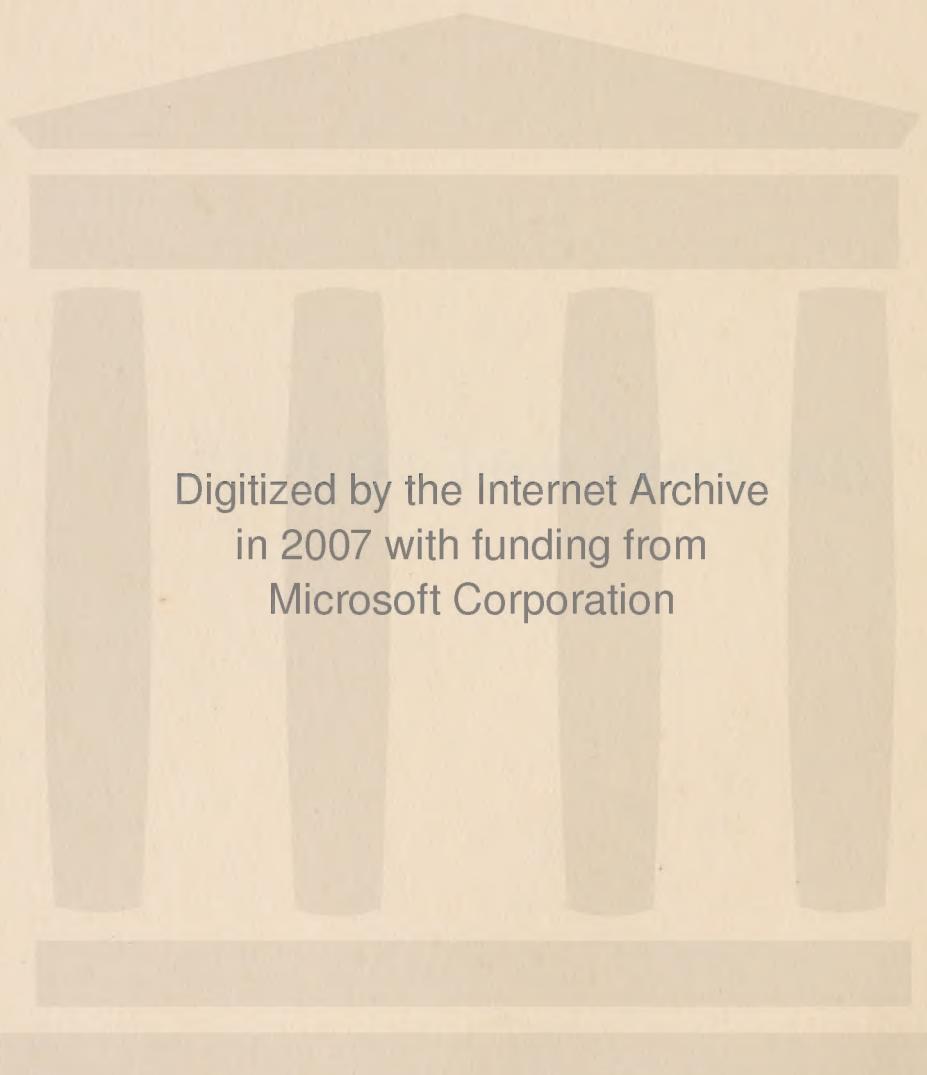
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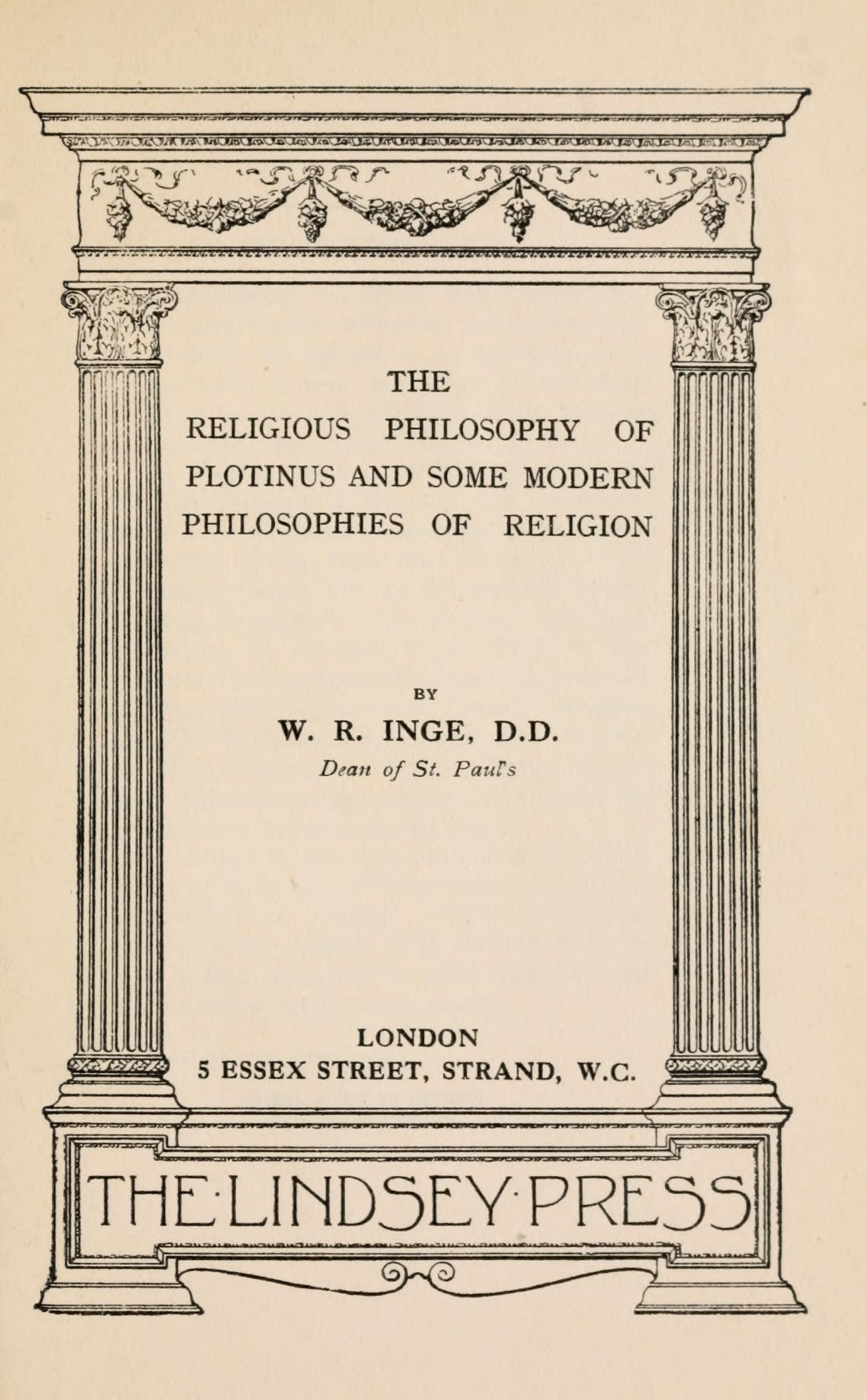
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THE  
RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF  
PLOTINUS AND SOME MODERN  
PHILOSOPHIES OF RELIGION

BY  
W. R. INGE, D.D.  
*Dean of St. Paul's*

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

IN establishing the Essex Hall Lecture the British and Foreign Unitarian Association had no intention of making it a manifesto of a denomination or sect, but simply desired that it should be the free utterance of the lecturer on some religious subject of general interest.

The first lecture was delivered in 1893 by the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, who discoursed on 'The Development of Theology as illustrated in English Poetry from 1780 to 1830.' 'The Relation of Jesus to his Age and our own,' by Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter; 'The Idea and Reality of Revelation,' by Professor H. H. Wendt; 'The Immortality of the Soul in the Poems of Tennyson and Browning,' by Sir Henry Jones; 'Religion and Life,' by Professor Rudolf Eucken; 'Heresy, its Ancient Wrongs and Modern Rights,' by the Rev. Alexander Gordon—these are a few of the subjects and lecturers in past years.

The lecture by the Dean of St. Paul's on 'The Religious Philosophy of Plotinus and some modern Philosophies of Religion' aroused widespread interest on the occasion of its delivery at Essex Hall, 3 June, 1914, and its publication has been eagerly looked for by many people.

LONDON, 30 *June*, 1914.



## THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF PLOTINUS AND SOME MODERN PHILOSOPHIES OF RELIGION.

**I**N an age when knowledge is so much specialized that there is a danger lest its votaries, like the builders of the Tower of Babel, lose contact with each other by not understanding each other's language, we are apt to underestimate the interdependence of the various branches of intellectual activity. We read histories of philosophy, and of scientific progress, and we are left to suppose that these studies go on their way quite unaffected by the fluctuations of social and political movements. Poli-

tical history, in the same way, takes little account of philosophical theory and scientific investigation. But even in natural science, and still more in philosophy, ethics, and religion, men only see what they have eyes to see. The wish is often father to the thought, even with persons of rare intellectual honesty. We pay close attention to what interests us; we follow paths which promise to lead us whither we wish to go. The desire to reach acceptable conclusions is apparent in metaphysics, unmistakable in ethics, and almost barefaced in systematic theology. Even naturalists are but children of their age. The theory of progress first arose in France in the generation before the Revolution. It was the creed of the Encyclopædists and Physiocrats, of

Rousseau and of the Revolution itself. It is expressed for history by Cordorcer, for biology by Lamarck. When it crossed to England, it characteristically took the form of faith in boundless industrial expansion. Its litanies were trade statistics, its goal the world-wide supremacy of British commerce. It may be studied to advantage in the smug and self-complacent philosophy of Macaulay's English History. Darwin's doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest is no less closely connected with the dominant social and political tendencies of his day. Just as 'La carrière ouverte aux talents' is pure Lamarckism, so 'The devil take the hindmost' is pure Darwinism. Determinism in philosophy and Calvinism in religion are naturally in favour chiefly with those

who are fairly well content with the world as it is, and who hold the comfortable theory that progress, being a law of nature, may be left to take care of itself. The English mind had turned with horror from the results of unchecked emotion and sentiment, as seen in the French Revolution, and the Romanticists were not strong enough to stem the tide of hard rationalism, often passing into materialism.

Now we see a counter-revolt against Darwinism, against determinism, against intellectualism, in full blast. The root of all these new movements, whether they call themselves neo-Lamarckism, Vitalism, Activism, Voluntarism, Pragmatism, or what not, is the new faith in the almost unlimited power of purposive effort, to ameliorate human conditions.

Inspired by it, biologists began to notice what looked like spontaneous adaptations of living creatures to their environment, and welcomed signs of a wild and playful exuberance in the creative forces of nature; philosophers began to interpret reality in terms not of substance or idea, but of life and activity; some exalted the freedom of the will till it seemed as if, for them, even the laws of nature were malleable to human desires; others disparaged intellectual concepts as mere counters, and talked of 'the will-world as the only real world'; others maintained that the mind constructs its pictures of an external world purely for its own convenience, and that only that can be called true which is proved to be a good working hypothesis. 'The gates of the future are open.' So

Bergson has said, with his usual felicity in epigram. That is what our generation wishes to believe in politics and social reform ; and it has welcomed with open arms the French, or rather Jewish philosopher, who has told us exactly what we wanted to hear. Our delight was increased when we were told that the intellect is only one, and not the best, line of progress ; that something called instinct, which at any rate is not an intellectual process, often provides a short cut to the point which we want to reach. Thinking is hard work ; what a joy to hear that it is mostly waste of time !

There are other factors also, besides those which I have mentioned, which add strength to the revolt against what is now called intellectualism. Democ-

racy finds very half-hearted support from science and philosophy. If we can lump together all students who do not think with one finger on the popular pulse under the derisive name of 'intellectuals,' we shall at any rate discover that they are few and weak, and is not this much the same, for all good democrats, as proving that they are wrong? Then too there are the conservative forces of religious orthodoxy, which were half-silenced but not at all convinced during the heyday of materialistic science. Supernaturalism, which was long ago called 'Faith's dearest child,' can lift up her head again under the shelter of the new philosophy. Not only is free-will rehabilitated, but the primitive spiritism of the savage can come forth unabashed from its lurking-places

in the minds of the half-educated. Ghosts once more walk abroad, and are patronized by the highly respectable gentlemen and ladies who study 'psychical research.' The medicine-man reappears as a 'faith-healer,' and makes a good income. 'Christian Science' churches, and hotels at Lourdes, do a roaring trade. Priests of the baser sort are overjoyed at the unexpected boom in their earliest line of business. The pride of the 'intellectuals' has indeed received a blow. They have learned that the ingrained mental habits of fifty thousand years are not to be destroyed by the labours of a few university professors.

If this revolt of the natural barbarian in civilized man takes form as a philosophical system, that system will have

to be a form of dualism. Already in Lotze we had a sharp distinction between persons and things ; while others have separated will and intellect dualistically. In Kant the rift was still *within* the reason. If the practical and the theoretical reason could come into contact with each other, the problem would be solved. But in his successors, war has been declared against the theoretical or speculative reason itself. Herbert Spencer already saw the danger, and protested against it. 'Let those who can, believe that there is eternal war between our intellectual faculties and our moral obligations. I for one can admit no such radical vice in the constitution of things.' But Herbert Spencer is out of fashion. 'Practical reason' is no longer for our contemporaries what

it was for Kant. It is almost an equivalent for irrational will. And since will can hardly exist in an atmosphere where reason is excluded, 'practical reason' has suffered a still further degradation, and is confounded with hysterical sentiment. Our extreme dislike of the eighteenth century, and our tendency to vilify this period and all its works, are very symptomatic. The eighteenth century believed in reason, and disliked moods of excitement.

The position of physical science in the midst of this strange movement is very curious. Such philosophies as those of William James and Bergson might seem to be absolutely destructive of the natural sciences. A 'wild universe,' which administers shocks even to its Creator (as William James suggests)

would be the despair of biologist, physicist, and historian alike. And Bergson's theory of time, if I understand it rightly, introduces an incalculable and confusing element into every scientific calculation except pure mathematics. A few men of science have taken fright and lost their tempers over the new philosophy ; but science as a whole simply ignores it, except that vitalistic theories in biology now receive a respectful attention which they would not have won thirty years ago. In all other ways, science is entirely untroubled by the new dualism, and will remain untroubled by it, as long as its own results continue to confirm its working hypotheses. In fact, the whole movement which I have described seems to me rather superficial. It is popular with

certain classes, for reasons which are fairly obvious ; but in a general way, unless we have some prejudice to defend, we assume, as our fathers did, that nature is uniform and continuous.

It remains to speak of the results of the new movement in religion. During the tyranny of the mechanical theory, religion was in the painful position of being driven from pillar to post. Its dogmas had been formed to suit the hypothesis of supranaturalistic dualism or occasional intervention, and during the so-called Ages of Faith it was regarded as certain that the world consists of two 'Orders,' the natural and the supernatural. Miracles were believed to be frequent ; and the obscene supernatural—in witchcraft—was as much in evidence as the 'mystical phenomena '

which stamped the approval of heaven upon the macerations and devotions of the cloister. In Roman Catholic theology, a line is still drawn between natural and supernatural phenomena, and between natural and supernatural virtues. Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, has shown how the domain of the supernatural began to shrink with the beginning of the modern period, and how, in the countries which have enjoyed the most advanced civilization, rationalism has gradually captured one stronghold of supernaturalism after another, till the defenders of the older world-view were driven to take refuge in the gaps still unfilled by science, gaps which were filling so rapidly that those who hid in them began to find themselves in a very tight place. For most religious persons,

the new attacks upon scientific determinism were very welcome, and I think justifiably so. But in the Modernist movement Christian apologetics took another turn, which promised a complete deliverance from the attacks of science and criticism. The movement began in the Latin countries, where controversies on the most serious issues are conducted with a fearless logic which few in England or Germany care to apply to them. The Modernists declare that their philosophical theory was forced upon them by the results of their historical criticism. This criticism led them to see in organized Christianity a syncretistic religion which owed quite as much to the beliefs and practices of the European peoples among whom it won its chief triumphs, as to the

teaching of its Founder. In dealing with the life and teaching of the historical Christ, they brushed aside all that the piety of German scholars had done to bring his life and teaching into connexion with modern problems and ideals. They stripped the figure of Christ of all that Christians have loved to see in him, and left us only an enthusiastic peasant, obsessed with the Messianic expectations which were common at the time in Palestine. Thus it became necessary to distinguish 'comme deux Christs,' the one the historical prophet, who had few claims on the reverence of posterity, and the other the object of the Church's worship, a non-historical dying and rising Saviour-God. It was this latter idea of Christ which, in the opinion of this school, formed

the centre of the Christian religion, and it was something of a historical accident that it attached itself to the name of a 'Messiah' who shared the fate of other Messiahs in the first century of our era. This theory of Christian origins is, I think, untenable in this harsh form ; but with necessary qualifications it is a theory which is likely to commend itself to many who do not believe in the Christian revelation. But the Modernists were not in this position. They were, or wished to be, loyal Catholics ; many of them were, and wished to remain, priests of the Roman Catholic Church. How were they to reconcile their love for the Catholic cultus and discipline with their extremely subversive opinions in historical criticism ? How could they worship a

Christ whose historical career was what they believed it to have been ? Christianity after all is a religion based on events which are supposed to be historical. It always felt itself to be a religion of a different type from the other religions of the Empire, in which the worship, through sacraments and dramatic representations, of a dying and rising God, was quite familiar. The Catholic Church would never come to any terms with these religions. It was therefore necessary for the Modernists to maintain that in accepting the Church's creeds, which ascribe the attributes of Deity to Jesus Christ, they were somehow speaking the truth. Thus the ' two Christs ' are affirmed by two kinds of truth. Historical criticism deals with truths of fact, while religion deals with

truths of faith. The former are 'theoretical' truths, the latter are 'practical' truths. And the philosophy of pragmatism lies ready to hand, offering to prove that practical truths are much more important, and much more true, than theoretical truths. Thus the question whether an event ever happened is, at any rate for religion, almost frivolous. The only important question is, What belief has the value of truth for me? *Lex orandi, lex credendi.* All the terms of religion belong to the sphere of faith. 'The historian,' says Loisy, 'does not need to remove God from history, for he never encounters Him there.'

Here is indeed a radical dualism, which can only escape from the charge of 'cutting the world in two with a hatchet' by reducing the world of

‘brute fact’ to an unsubstantial shadow. It is, I think, hardly worth taking seriously. It is the desperate expedient of men who wish to remain Catholics after they have ceased to be Christians. Incidentally, they have done Catholicism the fatal disservice of explaining it, by showing how large an element of what the despised intellectualist would call ‘make-believe’ is retained for its pragmatic value, and is notwithstanding presented as belonging to the order of historical fact. Such a method is effective and innocuous so long as it is quite *naïve* and unconscious; but no longer. If the ‘two kinds of truth’ are kept wholly apart, their pragmatical value is gone. If they are deliberately allowed to exchange values, moral sincerity is fatally compromised.

Such seems to me to be the position to-day. The stiff determinism of nineteenth century science has been really undermined. The mechanical theory of the nineteenth century was not sufficient to explain the phenomena of life. It was a working hypothesis for investigating the laws of inorganic matter ; and Christian apologists were quite justified in protesting against its application to beings endowed with conscious or self-conscious life. So much heavy artillery has been turned upon the crude metaphysics of naturalism that it is hardly necessary to recapitulate the arguments. The mechanical explanation of life and mind is a hypothesis which does not account for observed facts ; it attempts to explain everything by what it grew out of, whereas the truer method is that

of Aristotle, to discover the nature ( $\phiύσις$ ) of everything in its state of completed development; it ignores time and denies change—since every process of evolution or involution is theoretically reversible; it attempts to describe the world as containing existence without valuation, thereby setting up an abstract view of reality as ultimate truth—and nevertheless fails egregiously to eliminate values from its purview; it takes the world as an independent, objectively existing system, and ignores the part played by the perceiving mind. All these and other objections are familiar to all of us, and most of them are unanswerable.

And yet we cannot accept dualism. In a world divided against itself, science and rational ethics would be alike im-

possible, and our strongest philosophical instinct revolts against it. We seem to be threatened with an *impasse*, such as has befallen philosophy more than once before in its long history. The materialist philosophy, unsatisfactory as it was, presented a clear-cut scheme which professed to explain everything. We seem to be in danger of being driven back upon illogical eclecticism, or scepticism.

Can we get any help from the philosophical mystics? It is my belief that we can. They at least think that they have found what we want to find. They are absolutists—that is to say, they believe that a knowledge of ultimate reality is possible to man; they are monists—their whole quest is for the One in whom all contradictions are

reconciled ; their faith is not only thought out but lived out—their highest achievement is a beatific vision seen in direct experience ; they are deeply religious, and their devotion is blended with their speculation, so that the ‘intellectual love of God’ is no mere phrase for them. And finally, the strange uniformity of their system in widely different ages and countries seems to indicate that this type of thought and belief is less influenced by temporary currents than most others. Let us then sketch very briefly the kind of way in which a disciple of Plotinus, whom we may take as by far the greatest thinker of this school, would deal with some of the questions which are agitating the minds of our generation.

It may be taken as certain that neither

idealism in the modern sense (the doctrine that all reality is mental) nor the opposite theory of naïve realism, which makes mind only an epiphenomenon, ought to satisfy us. For the philosophical mystic reality is *spiritual*—it is constituted by the unity in duality of the perceiving spirit and the spiritual world which it perceives. Thus 'heaven' is for this philosophy something much more than the place where God lives. It is the outer side of his life and being—the whole content of his mind and entirely inseparable from it. It is not a place but an order of being—the only mode of being which is fully and completely real. This spiritual world contains every thought in the mind of God, every purpose in his will. Every person has there a distinct, though not exactly

a separate existence. All values are there preserved inviolable. We may say with Plotinus that nothing which truly *is*, can ever perish. This perfect spiritual world is not static and immobile, like a marble statue. It is not 'faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.' It is essentially life and activity. And though we cannot allow that there is any development in the life and mind of God himself, he enjoys a higher kind of activity, in which change and stationariness, movement and rest, are transcended. The life of Spirit—and of spirits, for in that world we retain our individuality—is eternal; but this eternity is not an endless series of moments, snipped off at one end but not at the other; it is a mode of existence, of which indestructibility is one

of the attributes. It is wholly above time and place, which belong, not to the world of Spirit, but to what Plotinus calls the world of Soul, which is created by Spirit. For although Spirit is perfect in itself, and needs nothing outside itself for its own fullness of life, it is in its nature *creative*. By an inner necessity of its nature, it must produce a world after its likeness. God is thus the Author of Nature, in the same sense, nearly, in which a man might be said to be the author of his own photograph. This is indeed the sense in which many early Christian theologians used the phrase. God is immanent in the world, not in the sense that he lives his own life in and by means of the visible universe, but because the universe derives its being from him, reflects

his thoughts and purposes, exhibits everywhere footprints of His Wisdom, Goodness, and Beauty, and in various degrees of conscious desire, strives to be reunited with him. It is not at all difficult to bring this philosophical world-view into correspondence with the Logos-theology of Greek Christianity, which indeed in its later phases, as developed by Basil and the two Gregorius, owed a great deal to Plotinus. It is important to recognize that this philosophy draws no hard lines across the field of existence ; those who have called it dualistic have misunderstood it from top to bottom. There is no barrier between Soul and Spirit—the spiritual world is the true home of spirits, a home to which they all hope to return one day. God ‘sent the souls down’ in order to

guide and give rational and moral form to what is below Soul; for Soul resembles the higher principle in being irresistibly impelled to create—to create after the image of its own Creator. ‘See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount,’ is the command given by the Divine Spirit to each human soul.

One great advantage which this philosophy has over many others is that it recognizes that what we loosely regard as ‘the world known to science’ is no simple self-existing cosmos, independent of us who perceive it, nor yet a mere subjective creation of our minds, but is an unstable projection of the average psychic life—a conglomerate of the forms which the soul has impressed upon that nebulous abstraction ‘Matter.’

Matter in Plotinus is not material ; it is not the name of ponderable and extended stuff. It is that which hypothetically would be left if we could abstract from objects all that gives them form and meaning—all, in fact, which makes them possible objects of thought. The world of science is demonstrably not the objects perceived by the senses ; it is rather a system of laws which the Soul both makes and finds—for the real-idealism of his doctrine of God determines our philosopher's view of soul-life also. The laws which the scientist thinks that he finds in Nature are the work of his own mind, which notwithstanding finds itself *in* those objects which are its own image, and more remotely the image of its own Author. Soul and its world are real, though on

the lower confines of reality. This world resembles the spiritual world as far as it can ; but in it reality is polarized and split up ; the very conditions of soul-life forbid it to be as perfect as its archetype. In our world, every idea of God appears as a purpose in process of realization. Our world consists of a vast complex of such purposes, all finite, with a beginning, middle, and end, interlacing with each other, wheels within wheels, and only to be recognized as divine ideas when they are gathered up in their full development and completion. Time is the form of purpose, and accordingly all our experience is set in the framework of Time. Space too is a necessary condition of our experience ; though Plotinus, rightly I think, gives Space a lower position than Time. Ideas

of space are the clearest, but the poorest, of our ideas. The reality of our world then consists in its power of expressing, under the form of processes in Space and Time, the ideas and purposes of the Divine mind. The truest view of the world is that which sees in it a system of law—not, however, in the limited sense in which naturalists talk of natural law, but as a system of harmonious values, which may be classified under three heads—the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Our world as it really is, is the sphere in which these three divine attributes are exhibited under the form of purposes in process of realization. A deep and subtle network of sympathies pervades the whole system; and therefore it is that the Soul must never be wrapped up in itself. The isolated, im-

penetrable self is a dangerous delusion ; it has no existence. The Soul can only save itself by losing itself—by forgetting the distinction between 'I' and 'Not-I' ; by reaching out in all directions after fuller experience, wider activity, richer affections. There is no natural limit to its expansion ; the Soul is potentially all-embracing. In knowing its world it comes to know itself, and in knowing itself it knows its world ; the two processes are interdependent and really one. The Soul creates in knowing, and knows by creating ; it stamps itself on Matter, and is reflected in Matter. But the Soul itself, and its world, are wholly dependent on that great spiritual world of eternal existence and eternal activity, which are the object of the Soul's worship, the source

from which it flowed, and the goal to which it strives to return.

This philosophy is a form of Absolutism, in that it makes the ultimate reality something which Spirit is not free to construct for itself, and which is not contingent on human needs or desires. It is a knowable and unchangeable system of values and existences, which is itself the source of all that happens in space and time. The Absolute is not to be identified with the Spiritual World—here the philosophy of mysticism parts company with Hegel and Bosanquet and others who up to this point have strong affinities with it. The Spiritual World cannot be the Absolute, because in it the subject-object relation, though harmonized, is not transcended. The whole world of existence is per-

meated with and indeed constituted by this duality in unity. We can form no notions of anything whatsoever without leaving the Absolute standpoint. *Omnis determinatio est negatio.* And yet our theory of the relations of subject and object necessarily implies an Absolute in which this distinction is transcended. Only this Absolute must be, as Plotinus says, 'beyond existence.' This does not mean non-existent. It only means that the forms of our thought which deal with finite existences are demonstrably inadequate to conceive or describe the Absolute. We are justified in speaking of it as the Source of all Being; and we are justified in regarding it as the ineffable Unity towards which the mind turns as the resolution of all contradictions, the ineffable Goodness towards

which the moral will turns as the final victory over all evil and imperfection, the ineffable Beauty which satisfies the love-longings of the Soul. Even in heaven, we may say, the beatified Spirit is able to look upwards, to love, and to aspire. In the human soul, which is a microcosm, having affinities with every grade of existence from top to bottom, there is an unknowable, super-existential element, by which we may at rare moments enter into immediate relations with the Absolute, the Godhead. It is an experience which is wholly indescribable. We may attempt to describe it by negatives—it is not thought, not will, not feeling, and so on. But in so saying the mystic means, it is the goal of thought, of will, and of feeling—a state in which our faculties, in gaining

all for which they exist, transcend the conditions of their own activities. However, this vision of the One is no necessary part of the spiritual life. The Absolute is the necessary background of this philosophy ; but it need not be an object of experience, which indeed, strictly speaking, it hardly can be. The mystical state, which is not confined to this vision, but in a sense awaits us at every step above our empirical selves, does not add anything to our knowledge. It rather enables us to feel and see what we already know ; but knowledge is not true knowledge until it is seen and felt—until, that is to say, we have made ourselves one with it and with its object.

Now how does this philosophy affect the question of the uniformity of Nature ? All Nature is the work of creative Spirit,

acting freely. There is no question of external compulsion. The regularity which we observe in Nature is what we should expect to find, if our hypothesis is true. For order and limitation are, Plotinus tells us, divine attributes. If God seems to do nothing, it is because he does everything. The observed uniformity of Nature in no way supports the theory of mechanical determinism. It does not oblige us to reduce intelligence to mechanism. These two things are sharply contrasted ; and our theory denies mechanism throughout. In a machine, all movements are transactions between one part and another part; they take place in accordance with constant laws ; and in such transactions there is no unity, nor anything new. For Plotinus, the view of Nature as a

mechanism is an abstraction, useful for certain purposes, but by no means the final truth. The 'laws' of which it speaks are the imprint of Soul ; they do not belong to Matter. And we cannot express the truth, even about external Nature, in merely quantitative categories, which is what the mechanical theory attempts to do. Much less do quantitative categories suffice to account for the operations of life and spirit. In the higher forms of existence, intelligence operates with far more apparent freedom. We are here in a region where mechanical laws do not apply. There is no fixed quantity of spiritual energy in the world. We can acquire more of it without abstracting a corresponding amount from some one else. The good things of the Spirit are increased by sharing.

Nor are spirits forbidden to penetrate each other by any material laws. Love laughs at metaphysical, no less than at physical barriers. Quantitative categories, in a word, fail where *value* comes in ; and value cannot be kept out. It is not a question of freedom *versus* determinism. Psychical facts may be as orderly as physical. And if they are not orderly, they may still be determined by some higher power, just as the orderly sequences of inanimate Nature may be determined by some higher power. But psychical facts cannot be explained in terms of physical attraction and repulsion, of weight and velocity. It is something if we can get this admitted. Mr. Bosanquet indeed thinks that all phenomena, including psychical, are theoretically capable of a

mechanical explanation. But the mechanical system would have to be very seriously modified in order to account for psychical phenomena ; and I should dispute the assertion that the mechanical theory can *explain* anything. It can note invariable sequence ; but causality, which implies creative action, is a category which it is debarred from using.

Vitalism, then, to my mind, asserts intelligence as against mechanism ; and so far it is right. When it seeks to carry war into the enemy's country, and brings confusion into the orderly field of science, it is wrong. The votary of human freedom has no need to postulate a ' wild ' universe, with W. James ; nor would his position be helped in any way by doing so. The world is free, because its Creator is free ; it is orderly, because

his method of ruling it is not habitual inattention varied by ebullitions of spasmodic interest.

What really happens is that the higher forms of life exhibit higher grades of value, and approach more nearly to the life of God (or Spirit) himself. A new organ, consciousness, has been evolved gradually for this purpose. Consciousness perhaps belongs to a state of unstable equilibrium, when the mind has to adjust itself to new conditions, and to form new habits. It is for consciousness that finite *foci* of life exist. I am disposed to agree with Plotinus, in opposition to most modern philosophers, in refusing to attribute a central and absolute value to consciousness, or to what modern philosophers call 'self-consciousness.' Strictly, there can be

no such thing as self-consciousness until we rise quite above the empirical self. In the ordinary soul-life, the mind and its object are never the same when we try to think about ourselves. And, as Plotinus observes, we do most things badly when we are self-conscious. 'Self-consciousness' makes us at once painfully aware of a not-self, and incapable of attending properly to it.

Consciousness is only one of the gifts which the soul acquires during its ascent. It receives an illumination which transforms itself and its environment together. Soul, in the terminology of Plotinus, is irradiated by Spirit, and becomes Spirit. This is, of course, not a 'merely intellectual' gain. I agree with Mr. Bosanquet (i. 348) that the presence of adequate ideas which are

inoperative in moral matters is greatly exaggerated. Ideas which are part of the main structure of the mind *must* be operative, as a light cannot help shining. The highest goodness, as Plotinus saw clearly, is of this spontaneous order. It is those who set God always before them who help their brother-man most effectually.

And here at last we come to Eucken, whom I have not yet named, although there is not much that I have said about Plotinus that does not apply to him. The 'New Birth' is the central doctrine of Eucken's philosophy. He is never tired of insisting that salvation consists in a definite transition from the common experience of life to a new and higher sphere, which he calls the life of Spirit. The doubt which I have

frequently felt about Eucken's philosophy is whether he does not contrast the two lives too dualistically. Sometimes he seems anxious to smash his neighbour Haeckel's universe as well as to build up his own. I do not forget that the same sharp contrasts occur in some of the best Christian philosophy, e.g., in that which underlies the Fourth Gospel. But while ethics may be frankly dualistic, since morality lives in the radical antithesis between good and evil, metaphysics must beware of being persuaded by ethics to draw the world in silhouette. Admission into the spiritual life is after all a matter of degree, and I am jealous of the rich spiritual treasure which resides in the study and knowledge of Nature and its laws.

But I find that Mr. Tudor Jones, whose 'Interpretation of Eucken's Philosophy' pleases me better than any other books about the great teacher of Jena, does not understand Eucken to maintain this sharp severance between the higher and the lower life. He brings Eucken very near to Plotinus. 'Eucken would insist (he says) that the mental and spiritual are present from the very beginning, and bring to a mental focus the impressions of the senses. In the interpretation of Eucken's philosophy several writers have missed the author's meaning here. They have conceived of spiritual life as something entirely different from the mental life. It is different, but only as the bud is different from the blossom ; it means at the religious level a greater

unfolding of a life which has been present at every stage in the history of civilization and culture.' Mr. Jones goes on to show how the life of the community, with the effort and sacrifice which it entails on the individual, 'calls into activity a still deeper, reserved energy of the soul. The soul now recognizes a value beyond the values of culture and civilization. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful appear as the sole realities by the side of which everything that preceded, if taken as complete in itself, appears as a great shadow or illusion. . . . Life is now viewed as consisting in a great and constant quest after these religious ideals. . . . A break takes place with the natural self ; the mental life of concepts, though necessary, is now seen to be insufficient ; and life is now

viewed as having a pearl of great price before its gaze. Here the *Stirb und werde* of Paul and Goethe becomes necessary. The real education of man now begins. His life becomes guided and governed by norms whose limits cannot be discovered, and which have never been realized in their wholeness on the face of our earth. What can these mean? They cannot be delusions or illusions, for they answer too deep a need of the soul to be reduced to that level. When the soul concentrates its deepest attention on these norms or ideals, they fascinate it, they draw hidden energies into activity, they give inklings of immortality. Is it not far more conceivable that such a vision of meaning, of beauty, and of enchantment is a new kind of reality—cosmic in its

nature, and eternal in its duration ?'

Such, according to his able interpreter, is the gist of Eucken's message about the spiritual life. Those who are acquainted with his own books will admit the justice of the summary. Are the affirmations of the illuminated soul tragic illusions or cosmic realities ? That is the question ; and if we follow Plotinus and Eucken we shall be in no doubt about the answer. The higher life has already been lived by very many. They agree in what they tell us about it. They speak that they do know, and testify that they have seen. Why should we not receive their witness ?

The great popularity of Eucken's writings both in Germany and England shows that our generation is ripe for this kind of religion. It is a very good

sign, if it is so. For this philosophy of life has nothing to fear from scientific or historical criticism. It is broad-based on personal experience, and buttressed by sound metaphysics. Its morality is pure and elevated ; it cares nothing for denominational barriers ; it finds ample room for science and art, honouring both ; and like Christianity, with which it has so much in common, it gives us a *valuation* of the good and evil of life, and is so a guide to practical wisdom. I will not speak of ' the religion of the future,' for there will be as many religions in the future as in the past ; but that this is the true line of progress in religion as well as in philosophy, I have no doubt whatever.

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